Job Announcement

*Research Assistant*

Based in Colorado Springs

**Position Title:** Research Assistant  
**Reports To:** Assistant Director  
**Start Date:** June 1st, 2020  
**FLSA Status:** Exempt

BSCS Science Learning (BSCS) has an immediate opening for a full-time research assistant to work on genetics education research projects. We seek a creative, motivated individual who shares our mission of improving science teaching and learning through research-driven innovation.

**About BSCS Science Learning**

BSCS Science Learning is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops, studies, and disseminates powerful approaches to science education. Founded in 1958, BSCS has brought the experience of inquiry learning to millions of students and teachers across the U.S. and around the world. Today, BSCS conducts research on science teaching and learning, develops instructional materials, offers professional learning programs for teachers, and conducts leadership development programs. Underlying all our work is a commitment to providing all young people with equitable, inclusive, and just science learning opportunities.

**The Role of a Research Assistant at BSCS**

Research assistants at BSCS participate in research and development projects as junior members of research teams. Research assistants play critical roles in supporting research, instructional materials development, and/or professional learning projects under the mentorship of BSCS research scientists. The position of research assistant provides on-the-job opportunities to learn educational research methods and to develop expertise in science education. Research assistants are expected to develop considerable knowledge and skills and to take on increasing levels of responsibility over time.

**Responsibilities of this Position**

This successful candidate will work with research scientists and research associates on research studies investigating genetics education. They will also have the opportunity to participate in curriculum writing and/or professional development for educators. The research assistant will have the opportunity to work on two or more of the following NSF-funded genetics education research projects:

*NSF-CORE Award # 1956152 - Collaborative Research: Improving the teaching of genetics in high school to avoid instilling misconceptions about gender differences.*

Recent research suggests that learning about genetics during high school biology can lead to a belief that inherent differences in the genes and brains of men and women are the main causes of gender differences in behavior and intellectual abilities (a belief known as neurogenetic essentialism). This belief is implicated in lowering girls’ sense of their own
STEM abilities, their feelings of belonging in STEM classes, and their interest in pursuing further education in STEM fields. The goal of this project is to answer important questions about how to teach genetics at the high school level in a manner that is scientifically accurate, but does not have these detrimental side effects. Specifically, this new line of experimental research will identify and revise the content in common genetics instruction that promotes the belief in neurogenetic essentialism. The proposed experiments will also explore how the beliefs of peers and teachers contribute to changes in such beliefs in students. This project is part of a collaboration with Dr. Andrei Cimpian (Associate Professor of Psychology at New York University) and Dr. Catherine Riegle-Crumb (Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction in STEM Education, University of Texas at Austin).

NSF-IUSE Award # 1914843 - Collaborative Research: Exploring How Undergraduate Learning of Multifactorial Genetics Affects Belief in Genetic Determinism. This project explores how the learning of multifactorial genetics affects belief in genetic determinism among undergraduates. The project team will develop computerized educational interventions that teach undergraduates about complex multifactorial genetics concepts. The project team will then study how these interventions influence belief in genetic determinism, implicit person theories, and the motivation to study STEM in a series of large randomized control trials carried out across many colleges and universities. This project is part of a collaboration with Dr. Michelle Smith (Associate Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University) and Dr. Gregory Radick (BSCS Research Affiliate and Professor of History and Philosophy of Biology at the University of Leeds).

NSF-CORE Award # 1660985 – Towards a More Humane Genetics Education: Exploring How Knowledge of Genetic Variation and Causation Affects Racial Bias. This project explores if and how the development of genomics literacy protects against the development of racism during adolescence. For more on this project please visit the humane genetics project webpage on the BSCS website (or click here). The project team will conduct professional institutes for middle and high school biology teachers to help them learn how to teach about human genetic variation to reduce racism. The project team will then conduct a randomized control trial of the humane genetics intervention.

The funding for the first year of this position will be provided by these three grants. The position may be renewed in subsequent years contingent upon funding availability and satisfactory performance.

The Research Assistant will be responsible for assisting with:

- survey/questionnaire design,
- experimental design,
- data collection,
- quantitative and qualitative analyses of data,
- curriculum writing,
- manuscript editing,
- in-service teacher professional development,
logistics related to the recruitment and professional development of teacher participants,
and administrative work related to the recruitment and informed consent of
research participants.

Required Education and Experience
- a BA/BS that includes substantial coursework in education, biology, sociology,
anthropology, or psychology
- at least one year of prior experience working on a social science or natural sciences research project (e.g., completing a senior thesis, assisting a professor with their research)

Required Skills and Abilities
- Internally motivated
- Flexible and open
- Excellent time management, workflow management, and interpersonal skills
- Able to work well in heterogeneous teams
- Statistical fluency at the level of basic descriptive and inferential statistics, as evidenced by college-level coursework and/or prior research assistantships.
- Fluency in all Microsoft Office applications (Excel, PowerPoint, and Word)

Preferred Skills and Interests
- A commitment to improving educational outcomes for underrepresented populations
- A career interest in either education or educational/social science research
- Experience working in adolescent or adult educational settings

Additional Information

The full-time, annual salary for this position is $32,000-$35,000. This position requires public speaking and travel. BSCS offers competitive compensation and a generous package of benefits, as well as a flexible and inclusive work environment, with a strong commitment to the professional growth of all staff.

BSCS’s offices are in Colorado Springs, the #2 city in US News & World Report’s 2018 Best Places to Live. Located along the Front Range of the Rockies one hour south of Denver, Colorado Springs is known for a mild climate, a vibrant arts community, and year-round outdoor recreation. Preference will be given to candidates who will relocate to Colorado Springs. For additional information about BSCS and our work, prospective applicants are encouraged to review the BSCS website (bscs.org).

BSCS Commitment to Diversity

BSCS Science Learning is committed to recruitment of a diverse staff so that we can bring the broadest possible range of perspectives to our mission of improving science teaching and learning. We are an equal opportunity employer. All applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disability (physical
and/or mental), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, military obligations, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, or any status protected by federal, state, or local law.

To Apply:

Applicants should send the following to careers@bscs.org:

(i) 1-2 page cover letter; (ii) curriculum vitae; (iii) one-page personal statement; (iv) and the names and contact information of three references who are willing to submit letters of recommendation upon request.

The cover letter should address your interest in the position and your qualifications for the job. The personal statement should explain how your work on the described projects will advance your career goals.

We will begin reviewing complete applications on May 15, 2020 and continue until the job is filled. Please put “Research Assistant” in the subject line.